

OHS BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 207

AUGUST 2018

2017 OHS HONOURS AND AWARDS WINNERS RECOGNIZED AT 130TH OHS AGM



2017 OHS Award winners gather for a group photo at the 130th Annual General Meeting of the OHS on June 23, 2018.

Daniel Dishaw, Communications and Outreach Coordinator
ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

The 2017 OHS Award winners travelled from across the province to join us at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto for the Society's 130th Annual General Meeting.

This year's group of winners represented an impressively diverse range of communities and topics. The winners for 2017 are as follows:

AWARDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

President's Award: **Murdoch Mysteries (Shaftesbury)**

Scadding Award of Excellence: **Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior**

Dorothy Duncan Award: **Clarendon & Miller Community Archives**

Russell K. Cooper Award: **Fort William Historical Park**

AWARDS FOR SERVICE

Cruikshank Gold Medal: **Pamela Cain**

Carnochan Award: **Richard Thomas**

Cemetery Preservation Award: **Cooley-Hatt Pioneer Cemetery**

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ACCESS BEYOND THE RAMP PART 9: BRINGING ART ALIVE FOR BLIND PATRONS



Students from the Algonquin College Museum Studies Program volunteer to describe art during John Rae's annual lecture.

John Rae
thepenguin@rogers.com

Editor's Note: In his first eight articles for the OHS Bulletin, entitled "Access Beyond the Ramp", John Rae explored a variety of access issues for museums and heritage organizations. In his ninth installment of this series, John discusses the development of audio tours at art galleries and museums, and how they can bring art alive for blind patrons.

John Rae is an OHS member, volunteer, Cruikshank Gold Medal winner, and also a member of the Inclusive Design and Accessibility Committee at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg.

While tactile access remains the most important way for a blind person to appreciate sculpture, a growing number of art galleries are offering audio-described tours where a guide describes the content of paintings, and provides the opportunity for some discussion of the painter, the time when it was created, and what motivated the painter to create the work.

There are no mandatory rules for describing a painting. I instruct describers to focus their description on what most interests you, or what is most prominent in the painting, as it will likely also be of greatest interest to their blind visitors.

Some describers start in the top left quadrant of a painting and move sequentially around the painting in a systematic manner, while others jump right in and begin describing what they consider to be the most important content of the painting. Both approaches can work, and the best approach may sometimes be dictated by the content of the painting.

As part of my annual lecture (on behalf of the OHS) for students in Algonquin College's Museum Studies Program, I asked the students to describe a piece of art. Here are some of their reflections on the activity:

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The Ontario Historical Society
34 Parkview Avenue
Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2
CANADA



OHS@ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA

ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA

/ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY

@ONTARIOHISTORY



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Caroline Di Cocco, President
carolinedicocco@gmail.com

I hope that everyone is enjoying their summer and all the wonderful weather we have been having this season. It's been a busy year for the Ontario Historical Society so far, including a very successful Annual General Meeting held on June 23 at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC). I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to make this year's AGM and Honours & Awards Ceremony a memorable event.

I personally spoke with several of our award recipients this year and I was incredibly impressed with them as a group, and as individuals. It was a pleasure to see so many aspects of our province's rich history represented by our 2017 award winners. We had a group from Thunder Bay that has worked to restore the beautiful lighthouses along Lake Superior's coast, going so far as to hire artists in residence and summer students to improve site accessibility and new cultural attractions. The OHS also recognized *Murdoch Mysteries*, an internationally adored television show that has brought Ontario's history to international audiences for twelve seasons. Among the many authors honoured this year, Ma-Nee Chacaby's *A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder* is a moving and compelling memoir that deals with the insidious and violent legacies of colonialism and residential schools in Ontario. The OHS also recognized Fort William Historical Park, a living-history site that has utilized strategic partnerships and new tourism initiatives to draw renewed interest in Ontario's fur trade history and several other engaging themes and narratives. These are just a select few, and I urge you to keep a watchful eye for the launch of our new website, where more information about all of the 2017 OHS Award winners will be featured soon.

I would also like to congratulate former OHS First Vice-President Pamela Cain, who was awarded the 2017 Cruikshank Medal for "performing with distinction on behalf of the OHS for many years". Unfortunately, Pam had to step down from the OHS Board of Directors earlier this year. She has been greatly missed. Thank you for all your years of hard work, Pam.

We were very lucky to have such a gracious host for this year's AGM. Jan Nobuto, Executive Board Member at the JCCC delivered a welcoming address to our members, while JCCC staff provided an engaging tour of the Moriyama Nikkei Heritage Centre at the end of our event. I would like to thank Haruko Ishihara and her colleagues for their hard work in preparing the venue for our meeting. We look forward to a continued partnership with the JCCC in the years to come.

This year's AGM and Honours and Awards Ceremony would not have been possible without the support of an impressive list of corporate, institutional, and private sponsors. A special thank you is owing to Toyota Manufacturing Canada Inc. for their generous support of our event. The OHS is also pleased to thank the following sponsors for their contributions: the New Credit Cultural Committee; Vikrant Financial Group, Scotia Wealth Management; Department of History, University of Toronto; PwC Canada; Department of History, Lakehead University; Jones DesLauriers Insurance



Photo - Daniel Dishaw

Jan Nobuto, Executive Board Member at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) welcomed the OHS to the Centre for the Society's 130th AGM. OHS President Caroline Di Cocco thanked Jan Nobuto for the kind reception and hospitality. Both remarked that this event constituted the beginning of an exciting new partnership between the OHS and the JCCC going forward.

Management Inc.; Department of History, Wilfrid Laurier University; University of Toronto Press; and the Department of History, Ryerson University. In addition, I would like to thank all of our individual donors and members who support our programs and events year-round.

I know attendees of this year's AGM were delighted to hear that Dr. Donald B. Smith, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Calgary, would be delivering the 2018 Keynote Address, "A 20th-Century Example of Reconciliation in Ontario: Paul Wallace and 'The White Roots of Peace'". Don's presentation was excellent and served as the perfect topic for this year's AGM, as the OHS continues to focus on Indigenous history and Reconciliation in Ontario.

I would like to welcome Jan Haskings-Winner, who was elected to the OHS Board of Directors at the 2018 AGM. Jan lives in Scarborough and teaches high school history. Jan also teaches History and Social Science online for Queen's University and Lakehead University.

Finally, I would like to highlight an important milestone in the Ontario Historical Society's history: our 2018 Annual General Meeting marked the 130th anniversary of the OHS. It's astonishing to think that the OHS has continued its important work for over 130 years. As the first organization to receive the patronage of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Society has worked with 35 different governments and 23 Premiers from four different political parties dating back to our establishment in 1888. We now look forward to working with a new government under Premier Doug Ford, and I would like to personally welcome Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon and our new Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Once again, thank you to everyone who attended our AGM, and all of our sponsors, donors, subscribers, volunteers, and staff. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

... 'ACCESS BEYOND THE RAMP' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I never fully appreciated what a person sees in art past the visual aspects. I loved it because I had to think about what the artist was trying to say, convey, what they were feeling along with the basic physical aspects of the artwork itself."

"Trying to find the words which accurately represent the image before us showed the class how complex and often underappreciated the ability



OHS Volunteer John Rae delivers an annual guest lecture to the students of Algonquin College's Museum Studies Program. John's expertise on accessibility practices in the public sphere, specifically in the heritage sector, make his lectures a great benefit to Ontario's museum studies students.

of sight is. It challenged us to use a sense in a way we typically do not to describe the pieces of artwork. It was fascinating to stop and think of the complexities required to describe art. It surprised me how difficult it was to challenge myself to 'view' art in a new light."

"Not having experienced an auditory description of a painting before, it was interesting to get a sense of the different approaches you can take when describing a painting. So much depends on how you describe what you see because you are the primary means for someone with a visual impairment to experience the work of art."

"The exercise really emphasized the importance of personal experience. Even with a perfect audio description of the artwork, it is hard to capture the potential personal and emotional content. We need to keep doing more to make galleries and museums accessible to all people to have their own full personal experience."

"It gave me insight into how museums should use those with disabilities to help to make sure their accessibility programs are working well."

Most describers I have met tell me that, after doing some audio tours, they develop a more in-depth appreciation of art. I am always happy that this is a win-win experience for both parties. Persons with disabilities live in every community, and many of us are more than willing to collaborate with museums or art galleries to help make their facilities and programs more accessible and inclusive.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rob Leverty, Executive Director
rleverty@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

An Act to incorporate The Ontario Historical Society, Assented to April, 1st, 1899, at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario authorizes the OHS to incorporate not-for-profit heritage corporations. The OHS is the only not-for-profit in North America with the legal power to establish and incorporate grassroots historical organizations—democratic voices dedicated to preserving and promoting some aspect of Ontario's history.

Since the financial crisis in 2008, all levels of government in Ontario (as well as private institutions) have been divesting themselves of our invaluable heritage assets. This has often occurred under the threat of demolition, deliberate neglect, or imminent destruction. This is an unprecedented crisis for the history of Ontario.

In response, the OHS has been incorporating new local historical corporations as quickly as possible to defend and protect our history for the public benefit. If volunteers and the not-for-profit sector do not emerge to assume legal stewardship of our heritage assets they will, in most cases, be lost forever.

The *OHS Act* is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. The visionaries who crafted the legislation in 1899 would be proud of the amazing legacy that they have left for the OHS and Ontario's not-for-profit heritage sector.

I am pleased to report that in the last nine months, the OHS has incorporated 10 new not-for-profit corporations through affiliation with the Society.

Since November 2017, the OHS has incorporated the Madill Church Preservation Society, Rella Braithewaite Black History Foundation, Friends of Hope Mill, The Junction Heritage Conservation District, Hockley Historic Community Hall & Church, UE Loyalists Bridge Annex, Brooklin Heritage Society, NOW Social History Foundation, and West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association. The most recent is the Latchford House of Memories Museum and Ontario Loggers Hall of Fame Society, which the OHS incorporated on July 18, 2018.



Secretary of the West Willowdale Neighbourhood Association (WWNA) Steven Biggs (left) and President of the WWNA Michael Koor (right) pose for a photo with OHS President Caroline Di Cocco at the 130th Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Historical Society in June. The WWNA was incorporated through affiliation with the OHS on June 22, 2018.

We salute all our fellow citizens who volunteer their skills, time, and dedication to establishing these new not-for-profit corporations in communities across Ontario to protect the public interest. Congratulations! Each of you makes this province a better place to live for all of us.

In 1898, the Hon. George William Ross, Minister of Education, took steps to include an annual grant of \$500 for the Ontario Historical Society in the estimates of the Ontario Department of Education to assist the Society in researching, writing, and publishing the history of Ontario.

This financial investment launched the OHS as a not-for-profit publisher and, since then, the Society has published the scholarly journal, *Ontario History*. Our journal constitutes the largest single collection of articles about Ontario's history, a priceless asset used and recognized by an international subscriber base.

Last year, *Ontario History* was made available electronically through a new partnership with the not-for-profit Canadian scholarly publisher Érudit. I am thrilled to report that recent statistics show that our journal has definitely gone global. Érudit's online platform has dramatically increased *Ontario History's* accessibility and readership. In 2017, the journal was viewed in more than



Photo Courtesy of The Temiskaming Speaker

On July 10th the OHS held a public incorporation meeting at the Community Hall in Latchford. Seen here after the successful meeting are (left to right) OHS Executive Director Rob Leverty with the new Board of Directors for the Latchford House of Memories and Loggers Hall of Fame Society (LHM&LHFS): Vicky Gray, Director; Craig Clattenburg, President; Emma Livingston, Vice-President; Sharon Gadoury, Treasurer; Mike Brooks, Director; George Lefebvre, Secretary. Craig and Emma are holding the motion that was adopted and signed to incorporate LHM&LHFS as a not-for-profit corporation through affiliation with the OHS.

55 countries, with new international digital subscriptions for universities and libraries in France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, and the United States (Duke, Yale, and Harvard). Online exposure and readership in Ontario—and the rest of Canada—have also increased exponentially as researchers and students discover the value and importance of *Ontario History*. For more information, please see erudit.org/en/journals/onhistory/.

Therefore, in the Society's 130th year, we can celebrate a strong and growing interest in Ontario's history, from the grassroots to the scholarly. This is due in large part to the hard work of our members, donors, volunteers, and subscribers and their continued support. Thank you, and enjoy the rest of your summer!

OHS WELCOMES NEW MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT THE HONOURABLE SYLVIA JONES



Photo: <http://sylviajonesmpp.ca>

The Ontario Historical Society welcomes the Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Minister Jones has served as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Dufferin–Caledon since 2007.



Robert J. Burns, Ph.D.
Heritage Resources Consultant

- Historical Research Analysis
- Heritage Impact Statements
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- Heritage Product Marketing Research

"Delivering the Past"

drjrburns@rogers.com
www.deliveringthepast.ca

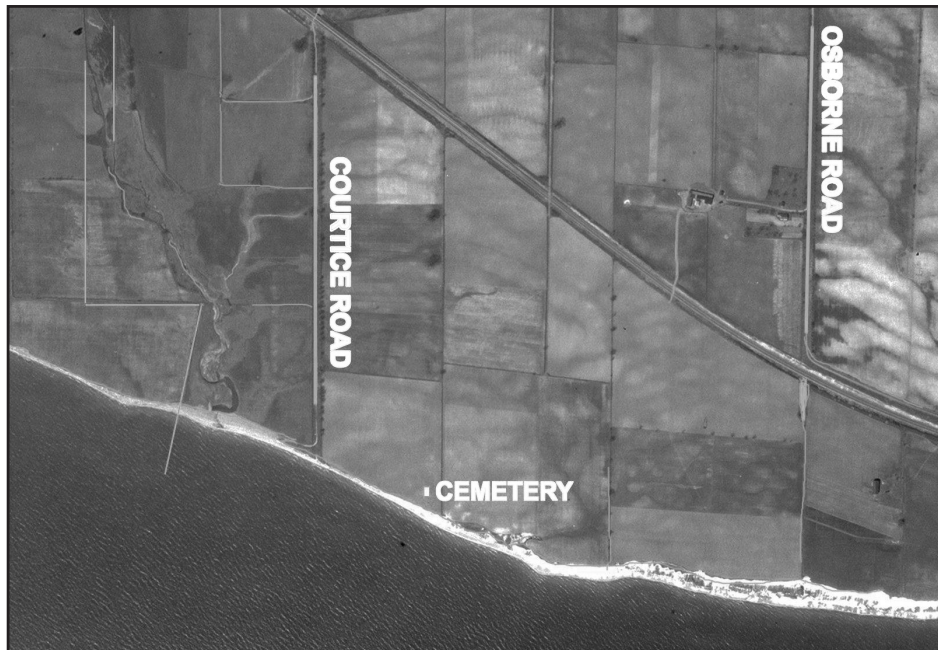
"The Baptist Parsonage" (est. 1855)
46249 Sparta Line, P.O. Box 84
Sparta, Ontario N0L 2H0
Tel/Fax: 519-775-2613

SEARCH FOR A LOST CEMETERY IN COURTICE

Clayton Self

lsuchan@sympatico.ca

I help run a page called Courtice Vintage History that details the history of this area of Clarington, Ontario from 1794–present. We recently learned of an abandoned cemetery on the Clarington Abandoned Cemetery map on the town's webpage. Very few knew of it—or its exact location—so we delved deeper. Since that time we have unearthed a trove of valuable information on the cemetery, the lot it was located on, and the family who used it as their burial ground.



1931 aerial of the pioneer cemetery.

The family in question, the Arnolds, are descended from United Empire Loyalists (UEL). A detailed timeline of the property they owned at the lake has been drawn up, which was the Broken Front Lot 28 East Half. On this lot, they set aside a cemetery burial plot. The lot eventually came into the possession of the Rundle family, and the last Rundle who lived on the lot is still alive today. We examined the deed to the lot (dated 1868), detailing the cemetery's location. Sadly, the owner who purchased the lot from the Rundle family in the 1980s did not take proper care of the grounds, allowing the cemetery to fall into a state of disrepair.

Thanks to the 1868 deed, we were able to determine the location of the cemetery. We were also aided by lake recession mathematics and the location of other known property lines. Finally, an aerial photograph of the area from 1931 was ordered, allowing us to confirm that the cemetery was exactly where we had outlined it. We then had a professional use software to match up the 1931 aerial image with the present-day roads and CN tracks to see how far the land at the lakeshore had receded toward the cemetery. As it turns out, the cemetery is now right below the cliff under a 10–15 foot mound of fallen soil.



Clayton standing on the apex of the cemetery.

We are fairly confident that at least three members of the Arnold family were buried here, thanks to the ancestral and burial records at our disposal: Oliver Arnold, 1759–1828; Elizabeth Brownson Arnold, 1776–1862; and Sarah Arnold, their grand-daughter, 1832–1840. For more information on this cemetery, please contact Laura Suchan at lsuchan@sympatico.ca.

...‘HONOURS AND AWARDS’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cemetery Preservation Award (*Honourable Mention*):
Barry and Dianne Munro (Lapp Family Cemetery)

AWARDS FOR AUTHORS

Joseph Brant Award: **Robert Vipond**
Making a Global City: How One Toronto School Embraced Diversity

Fred Landon Award: **Brian D. McInnes**
Sounding Thunder: The Stories of Francis Pegahmagabow

Alison Prentice Award: **Ma-Nee Chacaby & Mary Louisa Plummer**
A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder

Donald Grant Creighton Award: **Donald Wright**
Donald Creighton: A Life in History

J.J. Talman Award: **Karolyn Smardz Frost**
*Steal Away Home: One Woman's Epic Flight to Freedom—
And Her Long Road Back to the South*

Huguenot Society of Canada Award: **Carol Off**
All We Leave Behind: A Reporter's Journey into the Lives of Others



Photo - Rob Levery

On July 11th the OHS toured various historical sites in Mattawa including the museum, the cemetery, and the former CPR railway station (1903). The Mattawa Historical Society, which owns and operates the Mattawa & District Museum, is a long-time member of the OHS. Seen here in front of the Museum are summer students (left to right) Graeme Kulas (Archival Assistant), Madison Marsh (Managerial Assistant), and Janna Rose (Special Projects Assistant). Their summer jobs were funded through Canada Summer Jobs and YES Employment Services Inc. (Nipissing). For further information, contact mattawamuseum@gmail.com.

UPDATE: ALEXANDER HENRY REDEDICATED ON 60TH ANNIVERSARY



Photo - Michel Beaulieu

Bulletin readers will remember hearing about the Alexander Henry, the retired Canadian Coastguard icebreaker that was saved from the scrapyard by an OHS-affiliated society, the Lakehead Transportation Museum Society (LTMS). After the ship made port in Thunder Bay last June, arrangements began to rededicate the vessel as a museum ship. Built in Port Arthur in 1958, the Alexander Henry was originally christened and dedicated on July 18, 1958. 60 years to the day later, the Henry was rededicated by former crew member Annie Kolisnyk in Thunder Bay. LTMS President Charlie Brown reports that the ship is now open to the public on a daily basis.

MUSEUM MILESTONES

Dr. John Carter
drjohncarter@bell.net

There are many interesting things happening at the Waterfront Heritage Centre in Owen Sound. On May 1, their annual general meeting was held aboard the M.S. Chi-Cheemaun—certainly an appropriate and relevant setting for this marine-themed museum! At the AGM, three lifetime members (Scott Cameron, Ann Kelly, and Ross Kentner) were honoured. See Manager/Curator Wendy Tomlinson's article below for more information about this site.

At the Dufferin County Museum (now Museum of Dufferin), work is nearly completed on the new Corn Flower Glass Gallery. It will feature displays and lighting specifically designed to highlight glassware and the fascinating history of the W.J. Hughes Company, manufacturers of Cornflower glass. The official opening is scheduled for Saturday, October 6.

COMMUNITY WATERFRONT HERITAGE CENTRE

Wendy Tomlinson
info@waterfrontheritage.ca

Owen Sound has always attracted residents with its access to the Great Lakes and abundant natural resources. With the opening of the Toronto Grey Bruce Railway in 1873, Owen Sound finally had reliable year-round transportation. A decade later, the Grand Trunk Railway opened a line to Owen Sound. Considered one of the busiest ports in Canada by the turn of the 20th century, Owen Sound bustled with commerce and industry.

After the Canadian National (CNR) absorbed the Grand Trunk Railway, it built the charming train station (1932) that still stands today on the west side of the harbour. Passenger service continued until November 1970, while freight service continued into the 1980s before the tracks were eventually removed. The Owen Sound Historical Society (OSHS) acquired the CNR station with the intention of turning it into a museum. In the summer of 1985, the Marine & Rail Heritage Centre officially opened, operating as a volunteer-based organization for many years. It came under the care of a city-funded museum management board in 2000.

In June 2013, city officials announced their decision to close the museum, citing budgetary constraints. A 'For Lease' sign was put in the window of the heritage building (listed on the city's Heritage Registry). Rumors of demolition swirled as a plan to sell the valuable waterfront property to a developer was tabled. Residents, appalled by the decision, circulated a petition to save the site. Over 3,000 signatures were obtained and thousands of dollars raised. A public community meeting saw more than 400 people attend.



The Owen Sound Historical Society acquired the CNR station over three years ago with the intention of turning it into a museum. This photo shows the station in 2016 during a community event.

As a result of the town hall meeting, a volunteer steering committee was formed to oversee the establishment of a not-for-profit heritage organization in order to take ownership of the Community Waterfront Heritage Centre (CWHC). On October 19, 2013, the CWHC was incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society. After lengthy negotiations, the group took custodianship of the museum and its collections in April 2014. Volunteers opened the museum for its first season on July 1, 2014. The CWHC became a registered charity at the end of 2015.

The CWHC collection includes artefacts and archival materials relating to the marine, rail, and industrial history of Owen Sound. It features an impressive hand-built model ship collection, and two running, model railways. Past exhibits honoured the thirty-year history of the museum, and explored the mariners' art

There have been many recent staff changes at Ontario museums. At the Bishop House in Owen Sound, Mindy Gill-Johnson has departed, after being appointed as Education Officer for the Saugeen First Nation in Southampton. The new Curator is Emily Joliffe. Kate Russell has left the South Grey Museum in Flesherton. She will be replaced by Acting Curator/Manager Robert Iantorno.

At the Bruce County Archives in Southampton, Anne Marie Collins has retired as Archivist, and Deb Sturdevant will be taking over. Dennis Longchamps is the new Executive Director at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo. Dennis succeeds long-time Executive Director Bill Poole.

Dorothy Duncan, former Executive Director of the OHS, has moved from Orillia to Milton. I hope the move went well and that she is settling in and enjoying her new home.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Town of South Bruce Peninsula for awarding me with its 2018 Volunteer Award. This Certificate of Recognition was presented to acknowledge my community and volunteer contributions, including my work with the OHS and the writing and compiling of this column.



The CNR station in Owen Sound c.1930s–1940s.

of tattooing and knot tying. The popular 2017 exhibit, “Made in Owen Sound”, celebrated the long history of industry and shipbuilding in the city.

In 2015 CWHC acquired Canadian National Rail Coach #4884. Purchased with the intention of restoring it into a functional space for programming and events, the coach required an extensive rebuild. Built by Pullman in 1953, it began as a standard passenger car before being converted into a buffet coach with lounge-style seating and a lunch counter. It was retired from service in the early 1980s. The 85-ft-long car was moved over 170 kms to the museum site with funds raised by the community. Onlookers watched as cranes worked in tandem to lower the 62.5-tonne car onto the tracks. On a steamy August afternoon, the coach was rolled down the track to its final location in front of the restored 1940s CNR caboose.

Since arriving in Owen Sound, Coach #4884 has had its windows, exterior paint, and decals restored thanks to generous donations. Funds received for the interior refurbishment came from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Community Foundation Grey Bruce, Ontario Trillium Foundation Canada 150 Grant, and Tom Williams Waterfront Development Fund. These funds have been directed toward the installation of sewer and water lines, electrical re-wiring, HVAC systems, insulation, and the refurbishment of the kitchen, passenger cabin, and washrooms. This restoration project will be completed in 2018. From a humble grassroots community effort to an active museum celebrating its fifth year of operation, CWHC works with a diverse group of community partners and the City of Owen Sound to preserve local heritage and promote tourism and culture. CWHC's efforts were recognized with the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation in 2015, the Grey County Historical Society Certificate of Recognition in 2016, and the City of Owen Sound Cultural Heritage Award in 2017. The 2017 season saw the highest visitation numbers yet, with CWHC staff and volunteers welcoming more than ten thousand visitors to the museum. CWHC also hosted the popular Waterfront Festival that featured a dozen tugboats and the infamous giant rubber duck in the harbour.

So far, 2018 has been another exciting year! The summer exhibit, “Fish Tales”, will celebrate the history of commercial and recreational fishing in Owen Sound. This year will see the completion of the restoration of Coach #4884 and the acquisition of a 25-ft Chi-Cheemaun lifeboat. Stay tuned for details on this year's Waterfront Festival and the many special events and programs happening all year long.

The Community Waterfront Heritage Centre is open daily from Victoria Day weekend to Thanksgiving at 1155 1st Ave West, Owen Sound. For more information, call 519-371-3333, visit waterfrontheritage.ca, and follow us on Facebook.

Editor's Note: 2017 OHS Carnochan Award winner Richard Thomas is a former Founding President of the Community Heritage Waterfront Centre. Richard was one of the driving forces behind the campaign to incorporate a not-for-profit organization through affiliation with the OHS and save the CNR Station.

BARRY PENHALE'S ONTARIO

THE DIONNE QUINTUPLETS SAGA CONTINUES

Barry Penhale

barry@naturalheritagebooks.com

The birth of the Dionne quintuplets on May 28, 1934, was widely regarded as something of a miracle. The safe arrival of the five baby girls—a natural identical quintuplet birth being one in 57 million—quickly resulted in their becoming world famous. It is important to further note that Yvonne, Annette, Cécile, Emilie, and Marie Dionne outlived by more than five days the thirty sets of quintuplets known to have been born previously. In so many ways the Dionne births were truly quite the miracle.

Photo - Barry Penhale Collection



Cécile and Nurse Louise de Kiriline at feeding time.

Even when grown, with their once enormous popularity rooted in the past, the Dionne quintuplets never quite disappeared. And though it may be simply nostalgia on the part of those getting on in years, or the curiosity of a younger generation, their intriguing story continues to capture our attention. Most recently, renewed public interest has been piqued by the many newspaper articles focusing on the fate of the Dionne Quintuplets Museum in North Bay. That situation has brought the two surviving quints, Annette and Cécile, back in the news and reminded us of an important chapter in our past, one that seems to suggest that this is an appropriate place to journey back in time to the Ontario of the 1930s.

Prior to 1934 and the arrival of the quints, the Ontario northland notably lagged behind the rest of the province. This was a depressed time and place. People such as Oliva and Elzire Dionne struggled to survive on what could properly be described as “hardscrabble acres”, their meager holdings consisting of a farmhouse lacking hydro and indoor plumbing. Since the decent roads then lay to the south, tourism in the scenic Nipissing district was not yet a major industry, though

Photo - Barry Penhale Collection



Dr. A.R. Dafoe and Nurse Louise de Kiriline outside the Dionne quints' home.

sportsmen had much earlier discovered the French River; by the 30s, they had steadily opted to come north by automobile rather than rail. Though their visits increased annually, the numbers were puny compared to the staggering visitor count that lay ahead. And all due to the arrival of five baby girls. That each infant survived under such primitive conditions is indeed miraculous, and we need to recognize the role of a most capable country doctor, Allan Roy Dafoe, in their survival. Aided immeasurably by the round-the-clock nursing skills of a dedicated small team of nurses—most notably, head nurse Madame Louise de Kiriline. Working with the limited artificial means at their disposal, they tended the old-fashioned incubators that accommodated the babies with heated sleeping quarters. On the hour, it was necessary to replace hot water pots gone cold. No easy task when handling heavy iron kettles and boiling water. Pouring piping hot water into the crocks within the confines of a busy kitchen created a veritable steam bath! So delicate and small were the premature babies that fluctuating temperatures had to be avoided at all costs. Regulating the air conditions of the babies immediate surroundings was paramount once the crocks were placed below the babies' beds.

Though relieved by their survival, proud papa Dionne must have been at his wits' end when faced with the costs of raising five babies at the same time. With what I am sure were the best of intentions fuelled by desperation, Dionne sought advice from his priest and Dr. Dafoe as he pondered the offer of a contract that would permit exhibition of the babies at the Chicago World's Fair. With no other means available, he was, as one might say today, caught between a rock and a hard place. Little could he, or anyone else for that matter, have predicted the enormous popularity of the quints that lay ahead or that their very existence would generate incredible riches for the Ontario government coffers—substantially more than enough to stave off the then almost certain bankruptcy of a huge physical chunk of the province. Unfortunately, word of the Chicago Fair's interest led to the perception that Oliva and Elzire were not acting in the best interest of their baby girls, and the provincial government swiftly moved to make the quints wards of the state, assuring their guardianship until 1944. We will likely never know the full extent of the financial benefits to the government as a result of this arrangement.



Photo - Dionne Quints Heritage Board Facebook Group

The Dionne quintuplets home after being saved in 2017, thanks to the hard work of the Dionne Quints Heritage Board.

A commercial complex known by several names, but primarily identified as "Quintland" and bearing bilingual signs was erected soon after the quints were born. It proved to be a 'build it and they will come' situation. Provincial road maps of the day played up the routes that led to Callander, Corbeil, and the "Home of the Dionne Quintuplets". Visitors to the area, aptly dubbed "pilgrims" were soon lured in astounding numbers to what one publication called the "Land of Quintopia". Motorists quickly became familiar with such arteries as Highway 94 and especially King's Highway No. 11, with its direct route north from Toronto to the quints. By the summer of 1935, visitors to Quintland ranged from one thousand daily to crowds of three to five thousand on Sundays. American journalist Kirk Bates wrote in a 1943 *Milwaukee Journal* travel piece that the Dionne quints had become the "biggest attraction of all time".

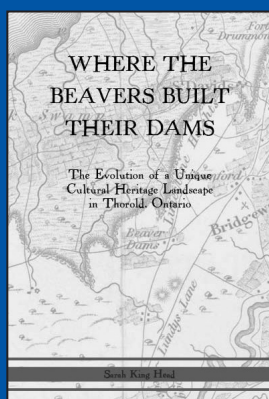
The surviving quints, Annette and Cécile, now in their 80s, must be especially gratified that the Dionne Quintuplets Museum (shuttered since October 2015) has avoided a sale to a community with no ties to the quintuplets and now has a new location in North Bay. It took a lengthy grassroots campaign involving many local citizens to save the house in which the quints were born. Kudos must also go to the Dionne Quints Heritage Board for their efforts in conserving a symbol of national historic importance. Already underway is the cataloguing of roughly 4,000 quints artefacts. I am also excited to report that on August 5, 2018, Annette and Cécile Dionne will travel to Thunder Bay for the first time in over 20 years to participate in an unveiling ceremony for a plaque commemorating “the national historic significance of the birth of the Dionne quintuplets”.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Dr. Cynthia Comacchio
ccomac5702@rogers.com

It's almost Canada Day as I prepare this column, and the Ontario weather is what can be best described as "unsettled", blowing hot and cold, often in the same day. For many, cottage country beckons. Kids are looking forward to their seemingly endless (or maybe only parents see it that way) summer vacation; there are gardens to tend and family trips in the offing. For many, the best part of summer's promise lies in the opportunity to catch up on reading, just for fun. Ontario history buffs will find a few contented hours with the following recent publications.

All three of this issue's selections are about particular geographic and social spaces. Sarah King Head's study speaks to the uniqueness of one small town, Thorold, in defining its particular cultural-historical landscape. Grant Karcich sets his parameters somewhat wider, following the portage trails that helped to define the current socioeconomic landscape of south-central Ontario. Charles Wilkins, although focusing on people—the professional surveyors who literally mapped this province—addresses their achievements in terms of how they effectively drew its fundamental units of land for population, transportation, production, and political purposes, to name the most salient. All three fill in much of the literal “ground-work” that we so often take for granted, both in examining the province's history and in going about our daily lives in twenty-first century Ontario.



Where the Beavers Built Their Dams: The Evolution of a Unique Cultural Heritage Landscape in Thorold, Ontario

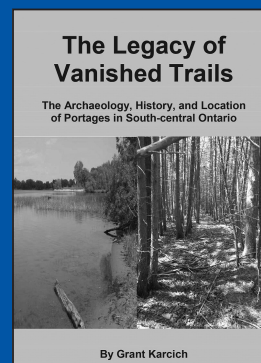
SARAH KING HEAD

Heritage Thorold LACAC, 2017;
Paperback; 166 pp.
<http://www.heritagethorold.com>

Often dwarfed by the fame of its world-renowned neighbour, Niagara Falls, Thorold nonetheless developed steadily since its first European settlement in the late 18th century into a modern industrial town, while managing to preserve its own heritage environment in ways that can only be envied by many heritage workers and volunteers elsewhere. *Where the Beavers Built Their Dams* is a thorough recounting of the cultural heritage of the municipality of Thorold. Author Sarah King Head, the city's official historian and Heritage Thorold researcher, was awarded the 2017 Architectural Conservancy of Ontario's Margaret and Nicholas Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Award on behalf of Heritage Thorold LACAC for her report *Beaverdams, a Cultural Heritage Landscape*. Originally commissioned to support a heritage designation for the Beaverdams/DeCew corridor situated within municipal bounds, that report forms the basis of this detailed history of the area. Head's conclusion is one that, for all its spatial and cultural specificity, applies to many of Ontario's municipalities. The original Beaver Dams village, populated by late 18th-century European political and economic refugees, was “firmly” established on the long-existing Indigenous infrastructure. Its subsequent articulation as Beaver Dams Centre, although “a deliberate construct”, nonetheless was also a “resilient” and “creative” response to “the fallout of a landscape utterly transformed by irrevocable industrial imperatives”. In its current incarnation, the community has adapted to contemporary land-use protocols and multinational immigration. From its Indigenous origins to the present day, the author traces the area's development in a story at once unique and also reflective of the historic trajectory of similar Ontario towns.

Although there is little left of the farms that the original European settlers established, the historic community and its later development as the town of Beaver Dams Centre are designated by provincial heritage authorities under the category of “associative” or “evolved” cultural heritage sites. In expanding on her award-winning report, the author has built on earlier genealogical and geographical research and has uncovered much that was hidden or lost in local and provincial archives. She clearly lays out the trajectory of the present-day city of Thorold from the original Indigenous arterial infrastructure laid out by the Attiwandaronk [Neutrals] people, the basis of the township's first European settlement, around 1790. She takes readers through the settlement process, the upheavals of the early 19th century—the area was an important site in the War of 1812, as the Laura Secord story testifies—through various iterations of the Welland Canal, to the industrial developments of the 20th century. Meticulously researched, richly detailed and very readable, this book is a model for other

communities working toward heritage designation or simply wanting to document their own cultural heritage.



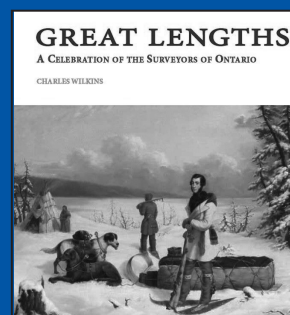
The Legacy of Vanished Trails: The Archaeology, History, and Location of Portages in South-central Ontario

GRANT KARCICH

Red Handprint Press, 2017;
Paperback; 236 pp.
redhandprint.ca

The opening paragraph of Grant Karcich's *The Legacy of Vanished Trails* capably sums up his book's contribution to our historical understanding of Ontario's past. He simply notes that “The importance of carrying places and portages... Their relevance to the First Nations people that created and maintained them over the centuries... [their] contribution... to the early European settlers” and their homesteading enterprise, is “often missed in the telling of Ontario's history”. Yet their relevance was recognized early on by such eminent late Victorians as Scottish-born Toronto archeologist, museologist, and historian David Boyle. Despite the fact that many of these trails had been obliterated by the urbanization already transforming much of the province's landscape, Boyle declared, in 1887, that, others “remain clearly traceable, and a record of them should be made at once”.

Karcich sets out to chart their historical importance from pre-contact to the twenty-first century. He begins by defining “carrying place”, a British term that is more usually interpreted and classified by the French word “portage” in Canada. Both signify the point in canoe travel where the canoe and supplies must be carried over land; we usually read them more broadly to mean the trails made and used by Indigenous and early colonists as transportation routes. After establishing the importance of, and ongoing interest in, the charting of portage trails in the province, Karcich deftly moves through his own consideration of the carrying places and portages east of the Toronto Carrying Place [which he contends has already been well covered] to the Bay of Quinte, and, moving northward, from the eastern end of Lake Simcoe south to Lake Ontario. He traces the precise route of seven of the most important south-central Ontario portages or carrying places. To do so, he thoroughly consults pre-history and archaeological resources; Indigenous history; and cartographic and textual evidence from the early colonists to twentieth-century surveyors, including historical and geographical documents. A particularly intriguing part of his discussion is his critical analysis of commemorative plaques; as he contends, they sometimes offer the only historical evidence available of those who used particular trails, but their information can be misleading and factually incorrect. And they are most certainly reflective of the times in which they were erected and the particular stance that the commemorators, usually educated white men such as Boyle, took toward First Nations peoples, “heroic” voyageurs, “pioneers”, and the wilderness itself. With maps, photographs both historic and contemporary, and a comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary materials, Karcich has done much to further our understanding of the centrality of these carrying places and portages in the making of south-central Ontario.



Great Lengths: A Celebration of the Surveyors of Ontario

CHARLES WILKINS

Association of Ontario
Land Surveyors, 2017;
Hardcover; 230 pp.
aols.org/resources/great-lengths

Veteran journalist and author Charles Wilkins has produced a handsome celebration of Ontario's hardy surveyors in his commissioned book, *Great Lengths*. From the entrancing full-colour cover art, featuring Paul Kane's 1845 oil painting, *The Surveyor*, through the frontispiece and endpapers excerpted from a 2002 condominium survey plan for Whitchurch-Stouffville, the book is lavishly illustrated with photographs, sketches, and other art work, and, of course, maps. Wilkins follows what can properly be called an adventurous past, through two centuries of one of the most adventurous occupations of all time. Interspersed throughout the chronicle of surveyors and what they surveyed are fascinating brief “profiles and waypoints” of people, events and perspectives that bring to light first-hand accounts, and lost voices and views—the piece on the ubiquitous blackfly is brilliant, as is the known but often neglected relationship between surveying and the development of an Ontario art scene.

The author notes how the physical challenges alone—the need to chop, manually, through more than a hundred mature spruce or jackpines per mile just to clear line through the forest, to “live rough” in the bush for months on end, to portage heavy equipment and food supply for miles—long eliminated any notion that women could participate.

Until well into the twentieth century, surveying was the purview of white men, with an occasional Indigenous guide or female cook, also often Indigenous. Canada’s first female surveyor, Lorraine Gladstone—who articulated in Leamington to her husband, surveyor Bill Settington—received her license in 1969. All told, this is a compelling and entertaining work that is both a tribute to the surveyors and a glimpse “behind the scenes” into a line of work that is easily romanticized for all its fundamental necessity to settlement and development, and also all too frequently dangerous.

If you know of any recently published works on Ontario’s history that specifically deal with local or regional history, please contact *Bulletin* Editor Daniel Dishaw at ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

A note to authors: Though we are pleased to accept your submissions for review, the timeline for publication in the *Bulletin* may vary. Due to a high volume of submissions, please be patient. We will publish a review for your book as soon as we can!

FEDERAL HERITAGE DESIGNATION FOR
GRAIN TRANSSHIPMENT AT THE LAKEHEAD



On June 27, 2018, Parks Canada unveiled a federal heritage designation plaque to commemorate the significance of grain industry facilities in Thunder Bay. The designation was championed by local heritage group, the Friends of Grain Elevators (FOGE), incorporated through affiliation with the OHS in 2016. Don Rusnak, MP for Thunder Bay-Rainy River, unveiled the plaque, remarking that “the grain elevators built here at the Lakehead created a vital economic partnership that linked east and west.” Pictured here are FOGE board members Robert Paterson, Bill Reist, Batia Stolar, Jim Ball, Kathleen Baleja, Herb Daniher, Gerry Heinrichs, Penny Stradeski, Ann Donaldson, Nancy Perozzo, and Charla Robinson.



In August 2017, the OHS received a private audience with the Society’s Honorary Patron, The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario to discuss the challenges facing Ontario’s heritage community. On May 8, 2018, the OHS attended the Lieutenant Governor’s reception in honour of patronage organizations at the Legislative Building, Queen’s Park, Toronto. In her remarks, the Lieutenant Governor stated that “In this province, the first to receive patronage is the Ontario Historical Society, so recognized in 1888 by our sixth Lieutenant Governor, Sir Alexander Campbell.” Seen here at the reception is OHS President Caroline Di Cocco (left), the Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and OHS Executive Director, Rob Leverty.

The *OHS Bulletin* is the newsletter of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS).

October issue copy deadline: **Friday, September 7, 2018.**

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Types of membership in the Society are: Individual \$45, Institution/Organization \$50, Life \$500.

Membership is open to all individuals and societies interested in the history of Ontario. The *OHS Bulletin* is sent free of charge to all members of the OHS. The OHS’s biannual scholarly journal, *Ontario History*, is available to members for an additional \$31.50 per year; member organizations,

institutions and non-member individuals for \$42.00; and to non-member organizations and institutions for \$52.50. Membership inquiries should be directed to Christina Perfetto at members@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca.

Inquiries about submissions and advertising: Daniel Dishaw, Editor, *OHS Bulletin*, 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale, ON M2N 3Y2 416-226-9011 ddishaw@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

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